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Agri-News

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Ag Economic Surveys Will Measure Farm Financial Health

Tennessee farmers and ranchers will have the opportunity to “let their voice be heard” by participating in the 1999 agricultural economic surveys. These surveys, titled the 1999 Agricultural Economics and Land Ownership Survey and the 1999 Agricultural Resource Management Study, provide vital statistics about the economic condition of production agriculture. Most important, they are used by members of the agricultural community and their legislators when making important decisions that impact the future of America’s farmers and ranchers.

Evaluating the impact of lower commodity prices combined with higher production costs, and 1999’s summer drought is just one example of local benefits resulting from these surveys. Data collected are also used to determine the percent of farmland owned by type of landlord at the State and national level. These data are also a resource when policymakers determine Federal assistance. In 1999, direct government payments totaled \$23 billion dollars—double the amount provided in 1998.

Agricultural producers chosen to participate in these surveys during February and March will represent from 50 to 100 fellow producers, and will therefore make an important contribution to the overall welfare of America’s farmers and ranchers. “Reliable, accurate descriptions of the current economic health of Tennessee’s farms are crucial,” said Gene Danekas, Tennessee State Statistician, “especially when policy makers, farm organizations, analysts, local USDA agents, news media, farm suppliers, lenders and others consider decisions that affect producers.” It is vital to the overall accuracy of the study that responses are received from all producers that are selected from this survey.

Results from these surveys will be used to compute prices paid, evaluate the economic health of America’s food and fiber producers, determine the need for farm assistance, measure the cost of farm production, and assess the ability for producers to maintain sustainable farms.

For a copy of the finished report or to obtain other agricultural statistics, visit the Tennessee Agricultural Statistics Service web site at www.nass.usda.gov/tn or call 1-800-626-0987.